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The Wadsworth-Longfellow House



Longfellow's Old Home

By Nathan Gould.





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“ But the poet's memory here
Of the landscape makes a part :
Like the river, swift and clear,
Flows his song through many a heart.”



ANNE LONGFELLOW PIERCE,
1810-1901,
THE DONOR OF THE HOUSE.

THE WADSWORTH - LONGFELLOW HOUSE

Longfellow's Old Home

PORTLAND, MAINE

ITS HISTORY AND ITS OCCUPANTS

BY

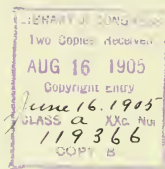
NATHAN GOOLD



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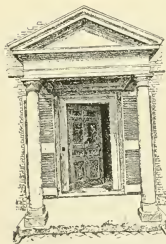


Photo by C. H. Brown.

The Old Wadsworth-Longfellow House and Its Occupants.

"We may build more splendid habitations,
Fill our rooms with paintings and with sculptures,
But we cannot buy with gold the old associations."

—*The Golden Milestone.*



THE WADSWORTH-LONGFELLOW HOUSE came into the possession of the Maine Historical Society in June, 1901, by donation from Anne Longfellow Pierce, a younger sister of Henry W. Longfellow, whose home it had been for more than eighty-seven years. It was the home of her parents and grandparents, and is to be preserved as a memorial of the families whose names it bears, the conditions of the gift being that the lower front rooms shall be kept furnished with their belongings, and the Society was required to construct a library building in the rear for the accommodation of their library and cabinet, which shall be their home

for at least half a century. It is now the intention to devote the whole house to the honor of these distinguished families, and for the pleasure and profit of visitors.

Anne Longfellow Pierce was born in this house March 3, 1810, married to George W. Pierce here in 1832, and where she died January 24, 1901, at the great age of ninety years, ten months, after a life of simplicity and usefulness, having the spirit which made this memorial a realization.



Henry W. Longfellow

1807 - 1882.

She had no children. Mr. Pierce was the classmate of her older brothers, and studied law in this house with her father. Twenty years after his death the Poet Longfellow wrote of him: "I have never ceased to feel that in his death something was taken from my own life which could never be restored. I have constantly in my memory his beautiful and manly character, frank, generous, impetuous, gentle; by turns joyous and sad, mirthful and



GENERAL PELEG WADSWORTH,
1748 - 1829.



ELIZABETH BARTLETT, HIS WIFE,
1753 - 1825.

serious; elevated by the consciousness of power, depressed by the misgivings of self-distrust, but always kind, always courteous; and, above all, noble in thought, word and deed." In the "Footsteps of Angels," he said of him:—

"He, the young and strong, who cherished
Noble longings for the strife,
By the roadside fell and perished,
Weary with the march of life."

He died November 15, 1835, aged nearly thirty years, after a married life of less than three years.

The house was built in the years 1785 and 1786, and was at first of but two stories with a pitched roof. It was two years in building because it was the first attempt in town to build a house whose four walls should be of brick. The bricks came from Philadelphia, and the walls are sixteen inches thick. The first year only enough bricks were brought to build the first story. The third story was added in 1815, after a fire in the roof the year before.

General Peleg Wadsworth was the builder. He was the father of the poet's mother, who was born in Duxbury, Mass., in 1778, and came here to live when she was about eight



HON. STEPHEN LONGFELLOW,
1776 - 1849.

years of age. He was a native of Duxbury, a graduate of Harvard College and had been a major-general in the army of the Revolution, where he rendered distinguished service. He bought the land in 1784 and built a store and barn that year. The house was begun the next year. He served his district in Congress fourteen years and declined a re-election. He removed to Hiram, Maine, founded that town, became its patriarch, and where he lies buried on his estate. He brought here six children. The first-born, Alexander Scammel, died inside the American lines, at Dorchester Heights, in 1775. The children who came here were Charles Lee,



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THE FRONT HALL.

Zilpah, Elizabeth, John, Lucia and Henry. Those born in this house were George, Alexander Scammel, Samuel Bartlett and Peleg. Elizabeth had obtained a lock of Washington's hair, at the time of his death, through her father, which she bequeathed to the people of Maine, at the time of her death, in 1802, then but twenty-two, which, with the correspondence and her will, is among the precious possessions of the Maine Historical Society.

Lieutenant Henry Wadsworth was born while the house was being built and from its door went to Tripoli with Commodore Preble, in the old



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THE GARDEN DOOR.
SHOWING THE "RAINY DAY VINE."

Constitution, where he voluntarily sacrificed his life in the fireship *Intrepid*, in 1804, at the early age of nineteen years. In this house Alexander Scammel Wadsworth was born, in 1790, who was at Tripoli, on the same frigate, and distinguished himself, as a lieutenant, on that historic vessel in the retreat of sixty-four hours from Broke's British squadron and in the famous battle, in the open sea, with the *Guerriere*, in 1812, when he was next in command to Captain Hull during nearly the whole engagement. This was the first British frigate to strike her flag to an American. He became a commodore and died in Washington, D.C., in 1851. His uniform, chapeau and sword are on exhibition.

General Wadsworth's appearance, at the time of the building of this house, was given by his daughter, Zilpah, as follows:—"Imagine to yourself a man of middle age, well proportioned, with a military air, and who carried himself so truly that many thought him tall. His dress, a bright scarlet coat, buff small clothes and vest, full ruffled bosom, ruffles over the hands, white stockings, shoes with silver buckles, white cravat bow in front, hair well powdered and tied behind in a club, so-called."

Stephen Longfellow was married, in this house, to Zilpah Wadsworth,

January 1, 1804. This had been her home from childhood. As a young lady, she was fond of dress and society, but in her later life was noted for her piety, patience, cheerfulness and fine manners, and held a high position in the society of the town by her intelligence and worth. On the broad stone stoop of this house, at twenty, she presented a banner, from the young ladies of Portland to the first uniformed militia company in Maine, "The

Federal Volunteers," in 1798. The Poet Longfellow's parents first lived here, but soon commenced housekeeping in the hip-roofed house, now standing, on the corner of Congress and Temple Streets, where their first child, Stephen, was born, in 1805. It was from that house that they removed to the father's sister Abigail's home, at the corner of Hancock and Fore Streets. Capt. Samuel Stephenson, the sister's husband, was obliged to go to the West Indies on business and they were there staying with his wife, during his absence, when Henry W. Longfellow was born, February 27,



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THE PARLOR.

1807. That never was a Longfellow house and the uncle only occupied it about three years. The first record of his birth is on the bill of the family physician, Dr. Shirley Erving, where can be seen this charge:—

"1807, Feby., for attendg on Mrs. L., . . . \$5.00."

Longfellow was named for his mother's brother, Lieut. Henry Wadsworth, and at the age of about eight months his parents came back to the old home, where they ever afterward lived. General Wadsworth's family had removed to Hiram, Maine, late in 1806, but he owned the house until his death in 1829, at the age of eighty-one, when it was bequeathed to Mrs.

Longfellow and her sister, Lucia Wadsworth. Miss Wadsworth lived here until her death, in 1864, at the age of eighty-one years. She is spoken of as the second mother to the children and was a most estimable woman.

In the Wadsworth-Longfellow House six of the Longfellow children were born and from its door five were buried. Two daughters were married here. Stephen, the first child, was a lawyer and civil engineer, was married and had children, dying in 1850, aged forty-five years, esteemed by those who knew him. Henry W. was the next child. Eliza-



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THE "DEN" OR THE OLD DINING ROOM.

"THE RAINY DAY DESK."

beth Wadsworth came next. She was a talented girl, who died in 1829, at twenty. The next was Anne, Mrs. Pierce. Then came Alexander Wadsworth, who married and had five children. He died in Portland, in 1901, at the age of eighty-six years, was a civil engineer and engaged in the United States Coast Survey and was a man who was an honored citizen and an esteemed gentleman. Mary, the sixth child, was born here in 1816, married, in 1839, James Greenleaf, and she died in Cambridge, Mass., in 1902, aged eighty-six years. She presented over twelve hundred volumes as a foundation of what has since become "The Greenleaf Law Library,"



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BACK OF THE LIVING ROOM.

in Portland, after the fire of 1866. She was a benefactor of several undertakings and is the largest contributor to the fund for the preservation of her birthplace, to this time. She had no children. Ellen, the next, died in 1834, at sixteen. The youngest was Samuel, born in 1819, a graduate of Harvard College, a Unitarian clergyman and the author of many hymns. He was loved and esteemed, never married, and died in Portland, in 1892, aged seventy-three years. A Longfellow family ditty was:—

“Stephen and Henry
 Eliz’beth and Anne
 * * * * *
 Alex. and Mary
 Ellen and Sam.”

William Willis, the historian, said of Hon. Stephen Longfellow:—
 “No man more surely gained the confidence of all who approached him or held it firmer: and those who knew him best loved him most.”

Mr. Longfellow was the son of Judge Stephen Longfellow, of Gorham, Maine, the grandson of Stephen Longfellow, the first schoolmaster of Portland, who was also the son of Stephen. The poet’s father, graduated at



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FRONT OF THE LIVING ROOM.
SHOWING THE POET'S FAVORITE CHAIR AND CORNER.

Harvard College in 1798, was a Selectman, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, Representative to the General Court, State Senator, and Representative to Congress in 1823-5. He died in this house in 1849, aged seventy-three years, and his wife in 1851, at the same age.

The poet wrote in his journal, March 12, 1851:—"In the chamber where I last took leave of her lay my mother, to welcome and take leave of me no more. I sat all that night alone with her,—without terror, almost without sorrow, so tranquil had been her death. A sense of peace came over me as if there had been no shock or jar in nature, but a harmonious close to a long life."

She died in the front room over the parlor and the father and Mrs. Pierce in the front room over the living or sitting room.

Henry W. Longfellow lived here during his childhood, boyhood and young manhood, and here he came, to his old home, to the end of his life. Here were the scenes of his bringing up and here he profited by the examples and precepts of his honored parents. Here he wrote his first poem and others, together with portions of his prose works. It was really his home until the purchase of the "Craigie House," at Cambridge, in 1843, a period

of thirty-five years. The home remained with the old furnishings undisturbed until the death of Mrs. Pierce. Longfellow's last visit here was in July, 1881, when he wrote to a friend in Rhode Island:—

"Portland has lost none of its charms. The weather is superb and the air equal to that of Newport or East Greenwich or any other Rhode Island seashore. I shall remain here a week or two longer, and think of running up to North Conway and to Sebago, to see the winding Songo once more. It is very pleasant sitting here and dictating letters. It is like thinking what one will say without taking the trouble of writing it. I have discovered a new pleasure."

The poems now known to have been written in this house are:—

The Battle of Lovell's Pond, 1820.

Musings, 1825.

The Spirit of Poetry, 1825.

Burial of Minnisink, 1825.

Song: When from the eye of day, 1826.

Song of the Birds, 1826.

The Lighthouse.

The Rainy Day, 1841.

Changed, 1858.

And probably others. A portion of *Hyperion* was written here and, no doubt, much was outlined in this house while staying here.

In 1824, while in college, he wrote a poem protesting against the removal of the old, wooden First Parish Meeting House, which was taken down and the present stone church built in 1825. In 1859 Longfellow presented to the Portland Natural History Society a portrait of Humboldt, from life. He gave two hundred dollars to the sufferers from the great Portland fire of July 4, 1866. July 1st he wrote a friend: "I have left the little girls in Portland, where I passed a day or two with them; and among other things had a sail down Casco Bay through the wooded islands and wished you were there." Later in the month he wrote this friend: "I have been in Portland since the fire. Desolation, desolation, desolation! It reminds me of Pompeii, 'that sepulch city.' The old family house was not burned, the track of the fire passing just below it."

Of the childhood of the Poet Longfellow some little has been preserved. About the time he was brought to this house, in October, 1807, the mother wrote: "I think you would like my little Henry W. He is an active rogue and wishes for nothing so much as singing and dancing. He would be very happy to have you raise him up to see the balls on the mirror."

In January, 1814, when he was hardly seven, he sent this message to his father, then in the General Court at Boston: "Oh, tell papa I am writing at school a, b, c; and send my love to him and I hope he will bring me a drum."

That month he wrote his first letter. He said:—

"Dear Papa:—Ann [Mrs. Pierce, then four] wants a little Bible like little Betsey's [her sister]. Will you please buy her one, if you can find any in Boston. I have been to school all the week and got only seven marks. I shall have a billet on Monday. I wish you to buy me a drum."

"Henry W. Longfellow."



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THE OLD KITCHEN.

His first school was, at three, where he went with his brother Stephen, to one on Spring Street, above High, kept by "Ma'am Fellows," then to a public school on Center Street for a very short time, then to Mr. Wright's private school, afterward to Mr. Carter, with whom he went to the Portland Academy, where he also came under Mr. Cushman.

At the age of six, in 1813, his schoolmaster, N. H. Carter, wrote the following billet to his parents: "Master Henry Longfellow is one of the best boys we have in school. He spells and reads very well. He also can add and multiply numbers. His conduct last quarter was very correct and amiable."

In his eleventh year Master Bezaleel Cushman wrote his father, the original being now in the house: "Stephen and Henry have both com-

menced this quarter with an unusual degree of diligence in their studies. Their deportment is remarkably good."

Nehemiah Cleveland wrote of him during his boyhood: "Most distinctly do I recall the bright, pleasant boy as I often saw him at his father's house, while I was living in Portland in the years 1816-17. My recollections of those interviews in that time-honored mansion and the excellent man whose reception of me was ever cordial and whose conversation was to me so agreeable and so instructive have never ceased to be a pleasure."

Rev. Elijah Kellogg wrote of the boy: "He was a very handsome boy. Retiring without being reserved, there was a frankness about him that won you at once. He looked you square in the face. His eyes were full of expression and it seemed as though you could look down into them as in a clear spring. He had no relish for rude sports; but loved to bathe in a little creek on the border of Deering's Oaks; and would tramp through the woods at times with a gun, but this was through the influence of others: he loved much better to lie under a tree and read."

His brother Samuel described him as a "lively boy with brown or chestnut hair, blue eyes, a delicate complexion and rosy cheeks; sensitive, impressionable; active, eager, impetuous, often impatient; quick-tempered, but as quickly appeased, kind-hearted and affectionate—the sunlight of the house. He had great neatness and love of order. He was always extremely conscientious, 'remarkably solicitous always to do right,' his mother wrote; 'True, high-minded and noble—never a mean thought or act,' said a sister: 'injustice in any shape he could not brook.' He was industrious, prompt and persevering; full of ardor, he went into everything he undertook with great zest."

The poet's early holidays were often spent at his grandfather's at Gorham, Maine, his father's birthplace, where he had the companionship of his cousin. Sometimes in vacations he visited his Grandfather Wadsworth, at Hiram, where he heard the stories of the Revolution and of the events in the founding of that town. Here he learned of the battle of Lovell's Pond



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THE KITCHEN DRESSER.

in Fryeburg, a neighboring town, and it was the subject of his first published poem, in 1820, then but thirteen.

Henry W. Longfellow, with his brother Stephen, entered Bowdoin College in 1821 and was then in his fifteenth year. The studies of the first year were pursued at home. Their three years' term and board bills have been preserved and are on exhibition in the house. Their class is said to have been the most famous of any that has ever graduated from any college in America. It was the celebrated class of 1825.

In 1824, while the poet was in college, his father wrote him in one of his letters: "My ambition has never been to accumulate wealth for my children, but to cultivate their minds in the best possible manner and to imbue them with correct moral, political and religious principles, believing that a person thus educated will, with proper diligence, be certain of attaining all the wealth which is necessary to happiness."

The Poet Longfellow remained here with his parents during the fall and winter after his graduation from Bowdoin College, studying law in his father's office, which was then in this house. In May, 1826, he started on his first voyage to Europe in a sailing vessel, the passage occupying thirty days. He remained abroad over three years. In one of his letters he said: "Traveling has its joys for him whose heart can whirl away in the sweep of life and the eddies of the world, like a bubble catching a thousand different hues from the sun: but happier is he whose heart rides quietly at anchor in the peaceful haven of home."

On his return, in 1829, Longfellow was elected the Professor of Modern Languages and the Librarian of Bowdoin College. He was then twenty-two. He then took up his work at Brunswick for which he had been fitting himself.

It was in 1831 that he married Mary Storer Potter, a daughter of Judge Barrett Potter, of Portland, who resided in the house now standing, No. 74 Free Street, where they were married. She was

"The being beauteous,
Who unto my youth was given,
More than all things else to love me."

They resided in Brunswick until his resignation of his position in the College, in the spring of 1835, when they both went abroad, he for further study. She died in Rotterdam the next November, at the age of twenty-three years. In December, 1836, he returned to America and became the Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard College, for which he had been preparing himself. His second marriage was to Frances Elizabeth Appleton, of Boston, in 1843, when the "Craigie House" became their home. They had six children. She was burned to death in 1861, at the age of



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THE GUEST ROOM, WITH THE FAMILY CRADLE.

forty-three years. Henry W. Longfellow died at his home at Cambridge, March 24, 1882, aged seventy-five years, mourned by the world.

The Wadsworth-Longfellow House, hallowed by its associations, no doubt contains the best collection of the belongings of an author's families on exhibition in the world. On the walls of the old dining room hang the original manuscripts of the addresses of General Lafayette and Hon. Stephen Longfellow delivered in Portland in 1825. There are many possessions of the Wadsworth family which are of much interest: besides manuscripts and household utensils, here are shown the cocked hat and canteen worn by General Wadsworth during the Revolutionary War, also the original deed of this land. There are too many articles to enumerate. Of the poet's life are shown the physician's bill at his birth, his baby cap and shirt, cradle, schoolbooks, term and board bills at college, his early sleeping room, his trunk of 1826 and the original banker's statements of his expenses on his first visit to Europe, 1826-29, together with many other articles and documents connected with his life. Portraits of the different members of the families are on exhibition, several not to be seen elsewhere. The costumes of the mother, her sisters and her daughters, some a century or more

old, are exhibited. The extent of the exhibition of the belongings of the Wadsworth and Longfellow families seems almost incredible. It is a surprise that they have been so well preserved.

It can be said of these families that at no time since the breaking out of the Revolution to this time, but that some member or members have been conspicuous in their State's history.

The old house has sixteen rooms. It was the home of the Wadsworth and Longfellow families for one hundred and fifteen years and is in a good state of preservation. It has no

“Weather-stains upon the wall,
And stairways worn, and crazy doors,
And creaking and uneven floors.”

It was

“Built in the old Colonial day,
When men lived in a grander way,
With ampler hospitality.”

It has eight open fireplaces, and in former times, during a year, over thirty cords of wood were burned in them. What a tale of bygone days they could tell!

“By the fireside there are old men seated,
Seeing ruined cities in the ashes,
Asking sadly
Of the Past what it can ne'er restore them.

“By the fireside there are youthful dreamers,
Building castles fair, with stately stairways,
Asking blindly
Of the Future what it cannot give them.

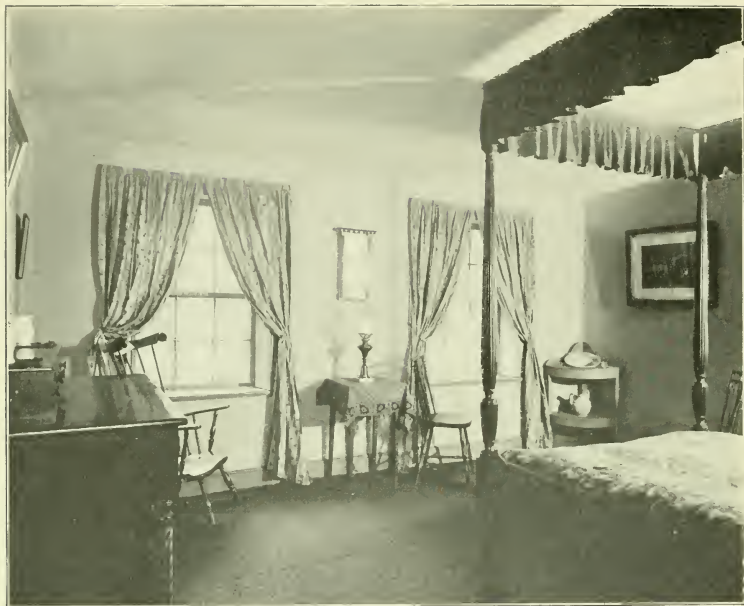
“By the fireside tragedies are acted
In whose scenes appear two actors only,
Wife and husband,
And above them God the sole spectator.

“By the fireside there are peace and comfort,
Wives and children with fair, thoughtful faces,
Waiting, watching
For a well-known footstep in the passage.”

The spacious hallway, with its easy staircase, runs through the house and is a good example of the comfortable architecture of former days.

The parlor was the largest in Portland when built and contained the first piano in town. The piano now there was the one purchased by Henry W. Longfellow for the “Craigie House” at the time of his marriage in 1843. It was used by his family many years. This room was the scene of the festivities, the weddings and the funerals of these families during the scores of years of their occupancy of the house.

The living or sitting room has the same general appearance as when occupied by them. For about ten years it was used by the father for a law



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THE POET'S SLEEPING ROOM

office, and the poet, his brother Stephen, George W. Pierce and others studied law here. The vestibule or "Little Room" was added as an addition or entrance to the law office. His brother wrote of Longfellow: "In this room the young graduate scribbled many a sheet." After the removal of the office, about 1828, this room was changed into a china closet and the poet wrote his sister Elizabeth, from Göttingen, under date of March 29, 1829: "My poetic career is finished. Since I left America I have hardly put two lines together; . . . and no soft poetic ray has irradiated my heart since the Goths and Vandals crossed the Rubicon of the front entry and turned the *sanctum sanctorum* of the 'Little Room,' into a china closet."

Back of the living room is the kitchen with its broad fireplace, in which is the old iron back, on which is the fish "that forever bakes in effigy." This fireplace has never been closed, and the utensils and china seen here were used by these families in the poet's time and before. This room, being as of old, is one of the most interesting in the house. It tells its own story.

On the opposite side of the front hall is the "Den" or the old dining room, made especially famous by the fact that here, between the windows,

looking out into the garden, on the same desk now standing there, was written "The Rainy Day" in 1841. From these windows the poet saw the flowering grapevine mentioned in the third line,

"The vine still clings to the mouldering wall,"

which is living and is still to be seen there. The furniture on the first floor of the house, on exhibition, was theirs and was used by the family.

The second story has four rooms, the "Mother's Room," the "Guest's Room," the "Children's Room" and Mrs. Pierce's old room. They contain a wonderful collection of the families' belongings for the inspection of the visitors interested.

The third story, added in 1815, is reached by a well-worn stairway of especial interest from the fact that over these stairs climbed the Longfellow children to their bedchambers where they were under the immediate charge of their aunt, Lucia Wadsworth. This floor has seven rooms. The room



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THE BOYS' ROOM.

THE OLD TRUNDLE-BED AND SCHOOL DESK.

of rooms is the poet's boyhood one, in which he wrote "Musings" and "The Lighthouse." It is furnished with many of the articles of yore. "The Boys' Room," which, at times, has been occupied by all the Longfellow boys, looks out on the garden and the western sky. It contains the old trundle-bed and the writings of the children on the casing of the window, with many articles of much interest. The remaining rooms on this floor are used for exhibition purposes. From the front windows, in those days, could be seen the harbor, its islands, and Cape Elizabeth ;

from those in the rear, Back Cove, the fields and forests, back of which loomed up the White Mountains. It was a magnificent prospect. Longfellow wrote :—

"Happy be whom neither wealth or fashion,
Nor the march of the encroaching city,
Drives an exile
From the hearth of his ancestral homestead."

On the window casing in the "Boys' Room" one of the children has inscribed, "How dear is the home of my childhood." The poet expressed his sentiments of the love of the old home in words that will never be stricken from our language :—

"Truly the love of home is interwoven with all that is pure and deep and lasting in earthly affections. Let us wander where we may, the heart

looks back with secret longings to the paternal roof. There the scattered rays of affection concentrate. Time may enfeeble them, distance overshadow them and the storms of life obstruct them for a season; but they will at length break through the cloud and storm, and glow and burn and brighten around the peaceful threshold of home."

The family were descendants from seven Mayflower Pilgrims, Elder William Brewster and his wife Mary, Love Brewster, William Mullins and wife, Priscilla Mullins and John Alden, all through the Wadsworths. The Longfellowes were Puritans.



REV. SAMUEL LONGFELLOW, "THE HYMN WRITER"
1819 - 1892.

The Wadsworth-Longfellow House is the most historic house in Maine. It has been the home of at least eight persons who would make fame for any house by their meritorious services or public benefactions. It will be a most fitting memorial for those whose home it was, especially America's greatest poet, Henry W. Longfellow. It will be the Mecca of the lovers of his verse and the world will have no better tribute to his memory.

The Maine Historical Society has accepted this trust and by the contributions of a generous public will bring it to a completion. This society was incorporated in 1822 and has a most honorable record. The poet's father was one of its presidents and Henry W. Longfellow was a librarian. The preservation of this old home is a worthy undertaking for a worthy society, and let success crown their efforts. Rev. Samuel Longfellow once said to a friend: "I hope they will leave some of the old places, for we need links with the past generations; there are few enough in America at best."

L. & C.



THE FATHER'S OLD HOME.

"The Longfellow Farm," at Gorham, Maine, was bought by the great-grandfather, Stephen Longfellow, "the schoolmaster," in 1761, 1762 and 1765, in one hundred acre lots. Here he went in 1775, when the British burned Portland, then Falmouth. The present house was probably built during the Revolutionary War, or soon after, and is probably not the one in which the father was born, in 1776. That was in another location. The grandfather, Judge Stephen Longfellow, came into possession of the farm in 1787, where he lived, and it was where he died in 1824. The grandmother, Patience Young, lived here until her death, in 1830. When Capt. Samuel Stephenson, in whose house the poet was born, in Portland, in 1807, removed to Gorham, February 22, 1808, he was given a portion of the old farm for a home, because his wife, Abigail, was a daughter of the Judge. Their house, enlarged in 1830, is still standing. He died there in 1858, aged eighty-two years, and his wife in 1869, at ninety. The "Longfellow Elms," which formerly extended around the old farm by the roadside, were set out about 1785. "The Longfellow Farm" is where the Longfellow children visited their grandparents of their name.

Soon after Rev. Samuel Longfellow, the youngest of this distinguished family, graduated from Harvard, in 1839, he made a visit to the

old farm. He was then twenty and his last grandparent had died nine years before. It was then that he wrote the following poem under the title, "The Homestead." It is one that will appeal to those who have similarly visited their grandparents' old home later in their lives. The place did not go out of the possession of the family until the latter part of the next year, 1840. The poem is reproduced here for the honor and fame of its esteemed author.

THE HOMESTEAD.

Home of my fathers ! once again
I stand beneath the shade
Of those ancestral trees where once
A dreamy child I played.
Their ancient elms still o'er thy roof
Their sheltering branches spread ;
But they who loved their pleasant shade
In heavenly places tread.

No longer at the window now
Their friendly glance I catch,
No longer hear, as I approach,
The sound of lifted latch ;
The ready hand which once threw wide
The hospitable door, —
I know its warm and hearty grasp
Still answers mine no more.

The red rose by the window still
Blooms brightly as of old ;
The woodbines still around the door
Their shining leaves unfold.
The pale syringa scents the air
Through the long summer hours ;
But ah ! the old beloved hands
No longer pluck their flowers.

I wander where the little brook
Still keeps its tranquil flow,
Where blooms the crimson cardinal,
And golden lilies glow,
Or, crossing o'er the wooden bridge,
I loiter on my way,
To watch where, in the sunny depths,
The darting minnows play.

That little bridge, the vine-clad elms
That guarded either end, —
Oh, with that spot how many dreams,
How many memories blend !
When summer suns at morning kissed
The dew from grass and flower,
I've wandered there ; and lingered long
At evening's holy hour.

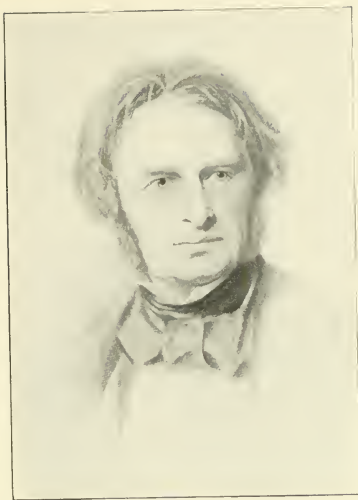
Still, as each spring returns, those trees
Put on their garments green ;
And still in summer hues arrayed
Those blooming flowers are seen ;
And when the autumn winds come down
To wrestle with the wood,
The gold and crimson leaves are shed
To float along the flood.

Thus seasons pass, and year on year
Follows with ceaseless pace ;
Though all things human change or die,
Unchanged is Nature's face.
Yet, when these well-remembered scenes
Before my vision glide,
I feel that they who made them fair
No more are by my side.

And one there was — now distant far —
Who shared my childish plays,
With whom I roamed in deeper joy
In boyhood's thoughtful days.
Dear cousin, round thine early home
When truant memory
Lingers in dreams of fond regret,
Dost thou e'er think of me ?

SAMUEL LONGFELLOW.

Gorham, 1839.



HENRY W. LONGFELLOW,
In 1855.

THE WRITING OF "MY LOST YOUTH."

In 1846, while the Poet Longfellow was visiting his old home, he wrote in his journal of taking a long walk around Munjoy Hill and down to Fort Lawrence, which was a fort of the War of 1812 at the easterly point of Portland, where the Grand Trunk Railway tracks are now. He says: "I lay down in one of the embrasures and listened to the lashing, lulling sound of the sea just at my feet. It was a beautiful afternoon and the harbor was full of white sails, coming and departing. Meditated a poem on the Old Fort."

It was not until March, 1855, that "My Lost Youth" was written. In his journal he said: "At night, as I lie in bed, a poem comes into my mind, a memory of Portland, my native town, the city by the sea.

'Sitteth the city wherein I was born
Upon the seashore.'"

The next day he said: "Wrote the poem; and am rather pleased with it and with bringing in of the old Lapland song,—

'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'"

This poem is that most cherished by the people of his native city. It is their heritage from him, a tribute from a town-born boy. It is as follows:

MY LOST YOUTH.

Often I think of the beautiful town
That is seated by the sea ;
Often in thought go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
And my youth comes back to me.
And a verse of a Lapland song
Is haunting my memory still :
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
And catch in sudden gleams
The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides
Of all my boyish dreams.
And the burden of that old song,
It murmurs and whispers still :
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the black wharves and the slips,
And the sea-tides tossing free ;
And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.
And the voice of that wayward song
Is singing and saying still :
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,¹
And the fort upon the hill ;²
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,
And the bugle wild and shrill.
And the music of that old song
Throbs in my memory still :
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the sea-fight far away,³
How it thundered o'er the tide !
And the dead captains, as they lay⁴
In their graves o'erlooking the tranquil bay
Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill :
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods ;⁵
And the friendships old and the early loves
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighborhoods.

And the verse of that sweet old song,
It flutters and murmurs still :
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the schoolboy's brain ;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies and in part
Are longings wild and vain.
And the voice of that fitful song
Sings on, and is never still :
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

There are things of which I may not speak ;
There are dreams that cannot die ;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
And bring a pallor to the cheek,
And a mist before the eye.
And the words of that fatal song
Come over me like a chill :
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town ;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,
As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still :
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were
I find my lost youth again.
And the strange and beautiful song,
The groves are repeating it still :
"A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

¹ "The bulwarks by the shore" was Fort Lawrence.

² "The fort upon the hill" was Fort Sumner, off North street, where "Fort Sumner Park" now is and south of it. He said of that fort that it "was one of the terrors of my childhood."

³ "The sea fight far away" was the battle between the Enterprise and Boxer, in 1813, forty miles from Portland, off Bristol, Maine.

⁴ "The dead captains as they lay, etc.," were Captains Burrows of the Enterprise and Blythe of the Boxer, both killed in the battle and buried side by side in the Eastern Cemetery.

⁵ "Deering's Woods," now Deering Park, presented by that family to the city for a public park, in 1879. It contains about fifty acres.

" CHANGED."

November 25, 1847, Longfellow, while in Portland, wrote in his journal: "After church, walked with Fessenden [William Pitt] to the 'gallows' that used to be,—a fine hillside looking down over the cove." This was at the corner of Congress and Vaughan Streets, at the head of Deering Avenue, called the "gallows" because at least two men had been hung there. This was the scene of "Changed," written by the poet, while on a visit to Portland, in 1858.

CHANGED.

From the outskirts of the town,
Where of old the mile-stone stood,
Now a stranger, looking down,
I behold the shadowy crown
Of the dark and haunted wood.

Is it changed or am I changed?
Ah! the oaks are fresh and green,
But the friends with whom I ranged
Through their thickets are estranged
By the years that intervene.

Bright as ever flows the sea,
Bright as ever shines the sun,
But alas! they seem to me
Not the sun that used to be,
Not the tides that used to run.

"The dark and haunted wood" was Deering's Woods, now Deering Park. The cove, spoken of in his journal, was Back Cove, now called Back Bay.

"Honor to those whose words or deeds
Thus help us in our daily needs,
And by their overflow
Raise us from what is low!"

FORM OF A BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the Maine Historical Society,
..... Dollars,
to be used for the maintenance of the Wadsworth-Longfellow
House and the Library of that Society.

Contributions should be sent to Fritz H. Jordan,
Treasurer of the Longfellow Memorial Fund, Portland,
Maine.

THE RAINY DAY.

The day is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
The vine still clings to the mouldering wall,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
And the day is dark and dreary.

My life is cold, and dark, and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
My thoughts still cling to the mouldering past,
But the hopes of youth fall thick in the blast,
And the days are dark and dreary.

Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;
Thy fate is the common fate of all,
Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days must be dark and dreary.

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